

Message Text

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ACTION CU-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 EUR-12 AID-05 XMB-02 COME-00 IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE UASHDC 3614

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ALSO FOR AF/C MARCUS

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SCUL/CM

SUBJ: GURC UNIVERSITY DELEGATION AND VISIT OF UNIPRES DELEGATION

SUMMARY: REPORT ON WHAT MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND GURC UNIVERSITY DELEGATION MEMBERS RELATED TO UNIPRES DELEGATION CONCERNING GOALS OF THEIR UPCOMING MISSION TU US: UNIPRES DELEGATION'S ADVICE TO GURC OFFICIALS AND OBSERVATIONS TO EMBASSY; AND EMBASSY ASSESMENT OF IMPORTANCE OF GURC MISSION.
END SUMMARY.

1. DURING TWO-DAY VISIT LAST WEEK PRESIDENTS COOK OF DILLARD U. AND MAGRATH OF MINNESOTA U, IN COMPANY OF PAO, HAD DISCUSSIONS IN DEPTH WITH LEADER OF GURC UNIVERSITY DELEGATION, CHANCELLOR ROBERT MBELLA MBAPPE OF YAOUNDE UNIVERSITY AND BIPOUM WOUN, DIRECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. ADDITIONALLY HOUR-LONG MEETING HELD WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND INFORMAL TALKS WITH ABOVE PLUS VICE-MINISTER OF EDUCATION CONTINUED OVER LUNCH AT AMBASSADOR' RESIDENCE.

2. GURC ASPIRATIONS FOR TRIP WHICH EMERGE FROM ABOVE DISCUSSIONS

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CAN BE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

A) TO SOLICIT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND EXPERTISE FOR ESTABLISHMENT THREE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY CENTERS IN THE FILEDS OF: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (DOUALA), PETRO-CHEMICALS (DOUALA), AND AGRICULTURE (TSCHANG); THE LATTER TO INCLUDE AN EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

B) BUILDING AND SOME EQUIPMENT FOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SCHOOL ALREADY MOSTLY PROVIDED IN TEN MILLION DOLLAR GRANT FROM SAUDI ARABIA. CAMEROONIANS HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT CURRICULUM WILL FOLLOW AMERICAN MODEL, WITH EMPHASIS ON CASE STUDY APPROACH AND WITH SUBSTANTIAL PARTICIPATION AMERICAN UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL IN BOTH PLANNING AND STAFFING OF SCHOOL.

C) NEEDS FOR PETRO-CHEMICAL AND AGRICULTURE CENTERS PRESUMABLY MORE EXTENSIVE AND INCLUDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR INFRA-STRUCTURE AND HELP IN PLANNING AND STAFFING BOTH INSTITUTIONS.

3. SEVERAL TIMES DURING DISCUSSIONS CAMEROONIAN POLITICAL APPOINTEES (CHANCELLOR AND MINISTER) INDICATED TURNING TO

AMERICA FOR ASSISTANCE CONSTITUTED POLITICAL DECISION TAKEN AT HIGHEST LEVEL.

4. ALSO EMPHASIZED DECISIONS GREW OUT OF THEIR REALIZATION THAT CAMEROONIAN HIGHER EDUCATION (PARTICULARLY FACULTIES OF HUMANITIES AND LAW WHICH ACCOUNT FOR EIGHTY PER CENT OF UNIVERSITY ENROLLMENT) NOT PROVIDING COUNTRY WITH EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT GOALS. EXECUTION OF PRESENT PLAN (WHICH ALSO INCLUDES FRENCH-SUPPORTED ENGINEERING FACULTY IN YAOUNDE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN NGAOUNDERE) WILL RESULT IN MORE BALANCED STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION. MENTION WAS MADE OF THE BAD SITUATION WHICH THE GRADUATING OF SEVERAL THOUSAND STUDENT WITH CLASSICAL EDUCATION EACH YEAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CREATES WHEN NO JOBS FOR THEM EXIST.

5. UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS AND PAO REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) TEN WORKING DAYS IS TOO SHORT A PERIOD FOR THEIR TRIP. THEY SHOULD THINK OF IT AS ONLY BEGINNING.

B) THEY SHOULD NOT TRY TO VISIT MORE THAN THREE OR FOUR UNIVERSITIES (WITH EXCEPTION OF UNIVERSITY VISITS WHICH MIGHT BE DOVETAILED INTO WASHINGTON VISIT).

C) MAJOR TIME SHOULD BE ALLOTTED TO CONTACTING FOUNDATIONS IN NEW YORK AND CONSULTING WITH DEPARTMENT, AID AND WORLD BANK OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. AMBASSADOR AND PRESIDENT COOK SUGGESTED THAT NEW YORK VISIT SHOULD CENTER AROUND FORMAL PRESENTATION BY GURC DELEGATION BEFORE REPRESENTATIVES DRAWN FROM LEADING FOUNDATIONS. AMBASSADOR WILL WRITE TO BENJAMIN PAYTON OF FORD FOUNDATION TO SOLICIT HIS HELP AND INTEREST IN ARRANGING SUCH A MEETING.

D) DELEGATION WILL HAVE REPEATEDLY TO EXPLAIN WHY CAMEROON IS AN ATTRACTIVE SITE FOR SUCH JOINT PROJECTS, EMPHASIZING ITS UNIQUE SITUATION AS:

- 1) ONE OF THE MOST STABLE AND MODERATE GOVERNMENTS IN AFRICA;
- 2) AN OFFICIALLY BI-LINGUAL COUNTRY WITH ENGLISH RECEIVING

INCREASING EMPHASIS IN EDUCATION AT ALL LEVELS, IT IS THE COUNTRY BEST SUITED TO INFLUENCE BOTH ANGLOPHONE AND FRONCO-PHONE COUNTRIES.

3) BECAUSE OF ABOVE FACTORS PLUS ITS NON-ALIGNED CREDENTIALS AND ITS CAREFULLY MEASURED USE OF FOREIGN ADVISES AND

INVESTMENT, CAMEROON ENJOYS PERHAPS HIGHER CREDIBILITY THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT THAN ANY OTHER SUB-SAHARAN COUNTRY AND THEREFORE WHAT SUCCEEDS IN CAMEROON IS LIKELY TO RECEIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION ELSEWHERE.

E) COMPLEXITY OF FACTORS ON AMERICAN SIDE, WITH FOUNDATION MONEY SCARCE, UNIVERSITIES PERHAPS WILLING TO ASSIST BUT WITH NO FUNDS OF THEIR OWN TO COMMIT AND NO CENTRAL AUTHORITY IN AMERICA EMPOWERED TO SAY YES AND THEN ADMINISTER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COORDINATE THE MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE WHICH THE SITUATION REQUIRES.

F) THAT IN SPITE OF ALL OF THE ABOVE DIFFICULTIES THEIR MISSION WORTHWHILE IF FOLLOWED BY PATIENT, ASSIDUOUS CULTIVATION OF CONTACTS THEY WILL MAKE.

G) PRESIDENTS COOK AND MAGRATH BOTH EMPHASIZED THAT POLITICAL CLIMATE IS FAVORABLE FOR SUCH A MISSION AND PRESIDENT MAGRATH PROMISED TO WRITE A ("DEAR FRITZ") LETTER TO VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE EMPHASIZING HIS POSITIVE IMPRESSION WHILE PRESIDENT COOK OFFERED TO CONTACT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WITH ESSENTIALLY THE SAME MESSAGE.

6. BOTH PRESIDENT, IN LATER CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR, AID DIRECTOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS, EMPHASIZED POSITIVE NATURE THEIR OWN IMPRESSIONS AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HELP IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. PRESIDENT MAGRATH HAD EARLIER EXTENDED HIS PERSONAL INVITATION TO DELEGATION MEMBERS TO HELP THEM SHOULD THEY DECIDE TO COME TO MINNESOTA AND PRESIDENT COOK SUGGESTED TO MINISTER OF EDUCATION THAT, GIVEN IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S ATTITUDE IN DETERMINING DEGREES OF UNIVERSITY'S DESIRE AND ABILITY TO COOPERATE, PLUS MINNESOTA'S STATURE AS LARGEST

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ALSO FOR AF/C MARCUS

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY, DELEGATION SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER
MAGRATH INVITAION.

7. EMBASSY AGREES WITH UNIPRES DELEGATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS
CONCERNING HOW GURC DELEGATION SHOULD DAVIDE ITS TIME. THEIR

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING UNIVERSITIES TO BE VISITED
INCLUDED HOWARD (AND PERHAPS ONE OR TWO OTHERS IN WASHINGTON AREA);
COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA(OR LIKE
INSTITUTION- MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY MENTIONED) AND UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA (PRESUMABLY DAVIS).

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8. WE BELIEVE CAMEROONIANS ARE PROVIDING US WITH UNIQUE
OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND AMERICAN INFLUENCE IN AREAS HITHERTO
DOMINATED BY FRENCH AND THAT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARTICIPATION
IN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION WILL PROVIDE EVENTUALLY
IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY FOR AMERICAN JOINT VENTURES, AND IMPROVED
TRADING RELATIONS, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO GROWING CAMEROONIAN
IMPORT MARKET.

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8. ALL THREE UNIVERSITY CENTERS, IF PROPERLY PLANNED AND STAFFED,
WILL IN OUR OPINION, MAKE MAJOR CONTRICUTIONS TO CAMEROON'S
CONTINUED, ORDERLY GROWTH AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND COULD
HAVE FAR-REACHING, POSITIVE AND STABILIZING INFLUENCE,
BY ENHANCING CAMEROON'S SUCCESS AND REFLECTING FAVORABLY
ON AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF IMPORTANT
AFRICAN GOALS.

9. WE FULLY REALIZE THAT DELEGATION'S VISIT COULD POTENTIALLY BACKFIRE IF SOME POSITIVE SIGNS OF COOPERATION DO NOT EVOLVE ON AMERICAN SIDE DURING TRIP. UNIPRES DELEGATION AND EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE TRIED THEIR UTMOST TO GET CAMEROONIANS TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF MECHANISMS INVOLVED IN RESPONDING TO THEIR NEEDS WITHOUT UNDULY DISCOURAGING THEM. SUGGEST THAT DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO ADD ITS EMPHASIS TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE A REALISTIC, YET POSITIVE ATTITUDE AS THEIR NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE.

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10. GURC DELEGATION'S CHIEF MEMBER, CHANCELLOR ROBERT MBELLA MBAPPE, IS A CORDIAL, FRENCH EDUCATED POLITICIAN WHO KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS AND IS LIKELY TO MAKE A LESS THAN IMPRESSIVE IMPACT AS A SCHOLAR, THOUGH HE IS BASICALLY CAPBALE. ADDITIONALLY, IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT CHANCELLOR IS HIGHLY TRAINED LAWYER, WAS FORMERLY A JUDGE, AND THAT A FRENCH JURIDICAL FRAME OF MIND PROFOUNDLY INFLUENCES HIS WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO HIM SINCE SOME COMPETITIVENESS EXISTS BETWEEN HIM AND VICE CHANCELLOR VICTOR NGU, DISTINGUISHED SURGEON AND MEDICAL RESEARCHER (CANCER) WHO SOMETIME MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE NOBEL PRIZE NOMINEE IN MEDICINE. AMERICAN TENDENCY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAY BE TO CONCENTRATE ON NGU BECAUSE OF HIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF AMERICAN SCENS, HIS FAMILIARITY WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND FOUNDATIONS, AND THE EASE WITH WHICH HE WILL COMMUNICATE. HOWEVER, ANY LACK OF ATTENTION TO CHANCELLOR WILL BE TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE DELEGATION'S HARMONY AND MAY CREATE DIFFICULTIES IN ARRIVING AT DECISIONS. THIRD MEMBER IS INTELLIGENT, WELL INFORMED FRANCOPHONE CIVIL SERVANT WITH ACUTE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH MINISTER OF EDUCATION. BOTH CHANCELLOR AND DIRECTOR HIGHER EDUCATION UNDERSTAND SOME ENGLISH.

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11. WE FEEL THAT CHANCES FOR MISSION'S SUCCESS WILL BE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED IF ESCORT OFFICER CAN PLAY ADVOCACY ROLE IN EXPLAINING IMPORTANCE (POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, LINGUISTIC, ETC.) OF CAMEROON DURING VISITS SINCE DELEGATION MEMBERS APT TO TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT PEOPLE THEY WILL VISIT WILL BE WELL INFORMED ON THIS. EMBASSY CONVINCED THAT WHEN BASIC FACTS ABOUT CAMEROON MADE KNOWN, POSITIVE IMPRESSION WILL ENSUE AS HAPPENED WITH PRESIDENTS COOK AND MAGRATH WHO LEFT YAOUNDE IN ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTIVE MOOD.

12. FOR MARCUS: PLEASE PASS APPROPRIATE PORTIONS TO MARTIN BURNS AT PHELPS-STOKES FUND.
SMYTHE

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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TAGS: SCUL, CM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d493b322-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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